

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 5 TEL AVIV 11123

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR; CAIRO FOR
AMBASSADOR AND USDEL; WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZYNSKI

E. O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PBOR PGOV EG IS XF
SUBJ: BEGIN'S REPORT ON HIS MEETINGS WITH SADAT IN ISMAILIA

REFS: (A) TEL AVIV 11023, (B) CAIRO 22940, (C) CAIRO 22938

SUMMARY: BEGIN IS GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH ISMAILIA
OUTCOME, PARTICULARLY WITH PROSPECT FOR SERIOUS DETAILED
NEGOTIATIONS IN COMMITTEES TO CONVENE JANUARY 15.
ATMOSPHERE OF MEETINGS CHARACTERIZED AS VERY FRIENDLY
AND INFORMAL. BEGIN BELIEVES IN SADAT'S GOOD FAITH AND
INTENTIONS, AND NOW UNDERSTANDS BETTER HIS PROBLEMS. BUT
HE IS CONVINCED HE HAS GONE A GREAT DISTANCE AT CON-
SIDERABLE RISK WITH HIS PROPOSALS AND TO GO MUCH FURTHER
DURING NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE HIGHLY DANGEROUS. HE IS
CONFIDENT KNESSET WILL SUPPORT HIM AS FAR AS HE HAS
THUS FAR GONE, BUT ANTICIPATES PAINFUL PROBLEMS
"WITH HIS OLDEST AND BEST FRIENDS." BEGIN WILL
MEET MONDAY IN MOROCCO WITH KING HASSAN, AND DAYAN
IS TODAY SECRETLY IN TEHRAN.

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1. I MET WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN THIS MORNING,
DECEMBER 27, FOR A LITTLE OVER AN HOUR TO OBTAIN
A DETAILED REPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY
ON THE ISMAILIA MEETINGS. YEHUDA AVNER, WHO WAS THE
NOTETAKER IN ISMAILIA, WAS THE ONLY OTHER PERSON PRESENT.
BEGIN WAS CALM, IN GOOD SPIRITS, AND GENERALLY SATISFIED
WITH THE OUTCOME AT ISMAILIA. HE SAID, "IT WAS A GOOD

CONFERENCE: REALISTICALLY, WHAT MORE COULD WE HAVE ACHIEVED AT THIS POINT?" HE WAS CLEARLY IMPRESSED BY A NUMBER OF ASPECTS OF SADAT'S PERFORMANCE AND SAID THAT THE DECISION AT THE VERY OUTSET TO SET UP THE TWO MINISTERIAL COMMITTEES WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AND WAS THE CRUCIAL DECISION WITHOUT WHICH THE CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE FAILED. BEGIN IS CLEARLY TIRED AND SHOWING SIGNS OF THE PHYSICAL STRAIN HE HAS BEEN UNDER, WHICH DOES NOT SHOW ANY SIGNS OF LETTING UP IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE EXPECTS CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL DIFFICULTY WITH SOME OF HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS IN THE DEBATES WHICH LIE AHEAD TODAY AND TOMORROW OVER HIS PROPOSALS IN THE KNESSET, BUT HE IS RESIGNED AND DETERMINED TO CONTINUE DOWN THE COURSE HE HAS NOW ADOPTED AND BELIEVES THAT HIS PROPOSALS ARE INDEED WELL THOUGHT OUT AND FAIR ONES.

2. BEGIN SAID THAT DURING THE FIRST GENERAL SESSION AFTER LUNCH ON SUNDAY HE HAD READ CAREFULLY TO THE TWO DELEGATIONS THE TEXT OF THE TWO PROPOSALS THEY WERE SUBMITTING: ONE DEALING WITH PRINCIPLES FOR A PEACE TREATY WITH EGYPT AND THE OTHER THE SLIGHTLY MODIFIED PROPOSAL FOR SELF-RULE FOR PALESTINIAN ARABS. BEGIN SAID THAT THEY DID NOT RPT NOT GIVE COPIES OF THESE DOCUMENTS TO THE EGYPTIANS, BUT SAID THEY WOULD FORWARD THEM THROUGH OUR EMBASSY IN CAIRO TO SADAT AFTER RETURNING TO JERUSALEM. HE HANDED ME COPIES THIS
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MORNING, AND ASKED THAT THEY BE TRANSMITTED TO SADAT VIA AMBASSADOR EILTS. HE SAID THAT THE TEXTS WERE ALSO BEING PROVIDED TO SECRETARY VANCE VIA AMBASSADOR DINITZ, TOGETHER WITH AN EXPLANATION OF EXACTLY WHAT CHANGES HAD BEEN MADE IN THE DOCUMENTS AFTER THEIR EARLIER VERSIONS HAD BEEN SHOWN TO US IN WASHINGTON. I AM TRANSMITTING THE TEXTS OF THESE TWO DOCUMENTS TO WASHINGTON AND TO CAIRO IN SEPTEL. FROM A QUICK INSPECTION, THERE ARE MINOR BUT SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FROM THE ORIGINAL VERSIONS. BEGIN SAID THAT SADAT AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAD LISTENED VERY INTENTLY TO THE READING OF THE PROPOSALS, BUT THAT THERE HAD BEEN RELATIVELY LITTLE DISCUSSION OF THEM IN ISMAILIA. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE EGYPTIANS WILL PREPARE COUNTER-PROPOSALS AFTER THEY HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO STUDY THE DOCUMENTS. THESE COUNTER-PROPOSALS WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE ISRAELIS IN THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEES WHEN THEY COMMENCE WORK ON JANUARY 15.

3. BEGIN THEN WENT MORE OR LESS CHRONOLOGICALLY THROUGH THE SESSIONS WITH ME. THE FIRST PRIVATE TALK BETWEEN BEGIN AND SADAT WAS THE POINT AT WHICH BEGIN SUGGESTED

THE FORMATION OF THE TWO MINISTERIAL COMMITTEES, AND THEIR VENUES IN CAIRO AND JERUSALEM. SMILING SOMEWHAT SELF-SATISFIEDLY AS HE RECALLED MY SKEPTICISM OF SATURDAY NIGHT ABOUT THE JERUSALEM SITE, BEGIN SAID THAT IN FACT SADAT HAD ACCEPTED BOTH THE IDEA OF THE COMMITTEES AND THEIR LOCATION IN ABOUT TWO MINUTES. SADAT HAD CHARACTERIZED THEM AS "A REALLY EXCELLENT IDEA WHICH HE HAD NOT THOUGHT OF." BEGIN SAID IT WAS QUITE CLEAR BY THE END OF THE MEETINGS THAT WITHOUT THIS INITIAL DECISION THE OVERALL IMPACT OF THE MEETINGS WOULD HAVE BEEN A FAILURE.

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EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR; CAIRO FOR AMBASSADOR AND USDEL; WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZYNSKI

4. BEGIN SAID HE THEN READ TO SADAT THE PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR A JOINT DECLARATION WHICH HAD BEEN DRAFTED BY THE ISRAELIS IN AN EFFORT TO MEET WHAT THEY UNDERSTOOD TO BE SADAT'S REQUIREMENTS (TEXT WAS PRESUMABLY THAT CONTAINED IN REF A). SADAT'S INITIAL REACTION WAS THAT THIS DECLARATION WOULD BE ENOUGH FOR THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, BUT HE FEARED IT WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH THE ARAB WORLD. BEGIN LEFT THE TEXT OF THE DOCUMENT THEN WITH SADAT FOR HIS FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

5. THE WORKING LUNCH WHICH FOLLOWED WAS APPARENTLY ALMOST ENTIRELY SOCIAL IN NATURE, OR AT LEAST DID NOT MATERIALLY ADVANCE THE DISCUSSIONS. IT WAS FOLLOWED BY THE FIRST GENERAL WORKING MEETING OF BOTH DELEGATIONS WHICH LASTED SOMEWHAT LESS THAN AN HOUR. IN THAT

MEETING, BEGIN OUTLINED IN DETAIL THE ISRAELI PROPOSALS FOR THE SELF-RULE PLAN FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND THE PRINCIPLES FOR A PEACE TREATY BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. THERE WAS SOME ALTHOUGH NOT A GREAT DEAL OF DISCUSSION. AT SEVERAL POINTS THE DELEGATIONS ADJOURNED BRIEFLY TO CONSULT AMONG THEMSELVES IN ADJOINING ROOMS. SADAT AND
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BEGIN STEPPED TO THE WINDOW SEVERAL TIMES FOR PRIVATE WORDS WITH EACH OTHER DURING THESE INTERMISSIONS. IN ONE OF THESE PRIVATE TALKS, SADAT SAID TO BEGIN THAT HE THOUGHT THE PROPOSALS FOR AUTONOMY "WERE A STEP FORWARD," WHICH BEGIN TOOK AS ENCOURAGING. THERE WAS AN AMUSING INTERLUDE EITHER AT THE END OF THE LUNCH OR EARLY IN THE WORKING SESSION WHILE PRESIDENT CARTER'S TELEPHONE CALL FROM PLAINS WAS AWAITED. FOR ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES THE PHONE RANG EVERY THREE OR FOUR MINUTES, SADAT WOULD PICK IT UP AND SHOUT "HELLO," "HELLO," "HELLO," INTO IT WITHOUT SUCCESS. THE CALL NEVER CAME THROUGH, AND EVENTUALLY AN HOUR LATER A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE ARRIVED IN PLACE OF THE CALL. DURING ONE OF THE PRIVATE ASIDES, SADAT REVERTED TO DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT DECLARATION. HE TOLD BEGIN THAT HE THOUGHT HE COULD AGREE ON THE CRITICAL PHRASE DEALING WITH THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WITH LANGUAGE WHICH STATED "A JUST SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN ARABS." HOWEVER, AFTER FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH HIS DELEGATION, SADAT THEN TOLD BEGIN PRIVATELY "MY FRIENDS DONT AGREE WITH ME, I JUST CANT DO IT." DURING THIS SESSION BEGIN FORMED THE IMPRESSION THAT SADAT WAS PRESSED CONSIDERABLY BY SOME OF HIS ADVISORS TO TAKE A TOUGHER POSITION THAN HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO TAKE. HE SINGLED OUT AMBASSADOR MEGUID AS THE "MOST DIFFICULT ONE OF THE GROUP." FOR EXAMPLE, AT ONE STAGE, MEGUID READ ONLY THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF RESOLUTION 338, LEAVING OUT PARAGRAPH TWO. BEGIN SAID HE THEN QUOTED PARAGRAPH TWO TO SADAT AND SADAT AGREED WITH BEGIN'S INTERPRETATION OF WHATEVER POINT WAS THEN UNDER DISCUSSION. AFTER IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THEY HAD REACHED AN IMPASSE OVER THE WORDING OF THE DECLARATION, BEGIN THEN SUGGESTED AN ADJOURNMENT UNTIL
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5 P.M. IN THE AFTERNOON. THIS WAS SUBSEQUENTLY EXTENDED UNTIL 7 O'CLOCK WHILE BOTH BEGIN AND SADAT RESTED.

6. APPARENTLY THE MAIN NEGOTIATION OVER THE DRAFT DECLARATION TOOK PLACE IN THE EVENING MEETING BETWEEN 7 AND 10 PM. AT THAT MEETING, SADAT PRESENTED AN EGYPTIAN DRAFT IN RESPONSE TO THE ISRAELI DRAFT. BEGIN SAID THAT LARGE PORTIONS OF IT HAD BEEN QUITE ACCEPTABLE TO HIM. HOWEVER, THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH STATED "ISRAEL UNDERTAKES TO WITHDRAW FROM SINAI, THE WEST BANK, THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, AND THE GAZA STRIP." BEGIN SAID HE, OF COURSE, HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO ACCEPT THIS LANGUAGE. HE THEN MADE, HE SAID, AN EXTENDED ARGUMENT TO SADAT THAT RESOLUTION 242 DID NOT RPT NOT REQUIRE WITHDRAWAL FROM "ALL" THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND WESNT INTO THE INTRICACIES OF THE LANGUAGE OF 242 AND ITS NEGOTIATING HISTORY. AT THE END OF THIS DISCUSSION, SADAT TURNED TO HIS DELEGATION AND SAID "TAKE IT OUT." IT WAS THEN AGREED TO INCORPORATE THE PRECISE LANGUAGE OF THE OPERATIVE PORTIONS OF 242 IN PLACE OF THIS PARAGRAPH.

7. THE NEGOTIATION OVER THE DECLARATION EVENTUALLY BROKE DOWN OVER HOW TO TREAT THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, WHICH IS NOT MENTIONED PER SE IN RESOLUTION 242. AFTER LENGTHY DISCUSSION, THE EGYPTIANS PROPOSED A KEY PHRASE WHICH READ "BASED ON THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE," IN PLACE OF ANY EXPLICIT MENTION OF A PALESTINIAN

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EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR; CAIRO FOR
AMBASSADOR AND USDEL; WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZYNSKI

STATE. BEGIN SAID THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS PHRASE,

FOR IT IS CLEAR THAT "SELF-DETERMINATION" IS TANTAMOUNT TO RECOGNIZING THE RIGHT TO AN INDEPENDENT STATE, AND HE THEN APPARENTLY WENT THROUGH WITH SADAT HIS FAMILIAR LITANY ABOUT THE UNACCEPTABLE DANGERS OF AN INDEPENDENT STATE BOTH TO ISRAEL AND TO EGYPT. BEGIN WAS SURPRISED AND STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT WHEN HE MENTIONED THE THREAT AN INDEPENDENT STATE POSED TO EGYPT, SADAT RESPONDED "ABSOLUTELY RIGHT." BEGIN ALSO SAID THAT SOME OF THE PLO ARE SOVIET AGENTS, AND SADAT IMMEDIATELY RESPONDED "ALL OF THEM*" BEGIN WAS ALSO VERY STRUCK BY ANOTHER COMMENT SADAT MADE ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION: SADAT SAID THAT HE WAS TELLING THE REJECTIONISTS "DON'T PRESS US TOO FAR, OR WE WILL DECIDE THAT WE ARE NO LONGER ARABS." BEGIN AND AVNER BOTH ATTRIBUTED GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS STATEMENT, WHICH PUT IN GRAPHIC TERMS WHAT THEY HAD ONLY HEARD SECOND HAND ABOUT THE EGYPTIAN TENDENCY TO REVERT TO ITS PHAROANIC TRADITION IF PRESSED TOO FAR BY THE RADICAL ARABS. DURING THE DISCUSSION OF "SELF-DETERMINATION," AMBASSADOR MEGUID QUOTED BEGIN'S RESPONSE DURING HIS "FACE THE NATION" APPEARANCE ON DECEMBER 18

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AND SAID THIS INDICATED BEGIN HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED SELF-DETERMINATION AS SYNONYMOUS WITH SELF-RULE. THERE WAS APPARENTLY A RATHER POLITE BUT POINTED EXCHANGE IN WHICH BEGIN SAID HE WAS WELL AWARE OF WHAT HE HAD SAID AND WHAT HE HAD MEANT; HE HAD MEANT THAT IT WAS PERHAPS REASONABLE FOR SOME PEOPLE TO BELIEVE OR TO INTERPRET AUTONOMY AS SYNONYMOUS WITH SELF-DETERMINATION. HE DID NOT RPT NOT SAY OR IMPLY THAT HE COULD ACCEPT THE PHRASE SELF-DETERMINATION, FOR IT WOULD LEAD INEVITABLY TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE WHICH WOULD PRESENT UNACCEPTABLE RISKS FOR ISRAELI SECURITY. ACCORDING TO BEGIN, SADAT SEEMED GENUINELY TO UNDERSTAND THE DILEMMA BETWEEN THE NEED FOR PROTECTION OF ISRAEL'S SECURITY AND DESIRE FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE. SADAT SAID WITH REGARD TO THIS DILEMMA "I HAVE NO ANSWER FOR IT." BEGIN SAID HE THEN WENT ON TO MAKE CLEAR THAT ISRAEL CLAIMED AND MAINTAINED ITS CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. HOWEVER, SINCE HE RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WERE CONFLICTING CLAIMS, HE HAD SUGGESTED SETTING THE CLAIMS ASIDE TO DEAL WITH THE HUMAN BEINGS INVOLVED IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT THE PALESTINIAN ARABS POSSESS TRUE AUTONOMY AND THE PALESTINIAN JEWS HAVE THE NECESSARY SECURITY.

8. BEGIN WAS SURPRISED BY SADAT'S REACTION WHEN HE EXPLAINED IN SOME DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE SIX-DAY WAR AS A WAR OF LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE. HE EXPLAINED THAT UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW, UNTIL A PEACE TREATY IS SIGNED,

ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF THE SINAI, GROWING OUT OF A
CONFLICT OF SELF-DEFENSE, IS TOTALLY LEGITIMATE. HE
STARTED TO REMIND SADAT IN THIS CONNECTION OF THE SLOGAN
TRUMPETED BY THE ARABS JUST BEFORE THE SIX-DAY WAR BEGAN;
SADAT INTERJECTED "YES--THROW THEM INTO THE SEA." THE
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FACT THAT SADAT HIMSELF APPARENTLY ACCEPTED BEGIN'S
ARGUMENT IN THIS FASHION MADE A DEEP IMPRESSION ON HIM.
THE EVENING NEGOTIATING SESSION APPARENTLY CONTINUED
WITH WHAT BEGIN CHARACTERIZED AS "ANIMATED AND EVEN DRAMATIC
DISCUSSION," BUT NO AGREEMENT. THE PARTICIPANTS DECIDED
TO ADJOURN AT 10 PM TO MEET THE NEXT MORNING.

9. ON MONDAY MORNING WHEN THEY RECONVENED AT 9 AM,
BEGIN AGAIN PROPOSED THAT SADAT ACCEPT FOR THE DECLARA-
TION THE FORMULATION "A JUST SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEM
OF THE PALESTINIAN ARABS." IF THIS COULD NOT BE
ACCEPTED, HOWEVER, HE SAID HE THEN PROPOSED USING THE
FORMULA SUBSEQUENTLY ADOPTED AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE
OF HAVING A PRECISE STATEMENT OF EACH SIDE'S DIFFERING
VIEWS ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, ANALOGOUS, HE SAID, TO
THE TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED ON OTHER OCCASIONS SUCH AS THE
SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA.

10. APPARENTLY AT THIS FINAL SESSION, THERE WAS A
RENEWED EFFORT, WHICH SADAT FOR A WHILE SEEMED INCLINED
TO SUPPORT, TO TAKE THOSE PORTIONS AGREED UPON FROM THE
DECLARATION AND MAKE THEM INTO A FORMALLY AGREED PAPER.
UNDER THIS CONCEPT, THERE WOULD BE AN AGREED DECLARATION,
WITH THE DIFFERING OPINIONS ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION
PUBLICLY STATED APART FROM THE DECLARATION ITSELF. THIS
IDEA WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED BY SOME OF SADAT'S ADVISORS
WHO FELT IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS FOR HIM TO SIGN ANY
DOCUMENT WHICH DID NOT HAVE AN ACCEPTABLE FORMULATION
ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN IT. THE END RESULT WAS THE
STATEMENT READ BY SADAT AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE.

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EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SAUNDERS FROM AMBASSADOR; CAIRO FOR
AMBASSADOR AND USDEL; WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZYNSKI

11. BEGIN DESCRIBED THE INCIDENT IN WHICH SADAT OVER-
RULED MEGUID ON THE QUESTION OF "PEACE TREATY VERSUS
PEACE AGREEMENT" WHICH IS ALSO RELATED IN PARA NINE OF
REF C BY ELISSAR. HE DESCRIBED THE ATMOSPHERE THROUGH-
OUT ALL OF THE MEETINGS AS GOOD AND "VERY FRIENDLY,"
MARKED HERE AND THERE WITH A GOOD DEAL OF HUMOR AND
A GREAT DEAL OF HOSPITALITY. HE DESCRIBED A STRIKING
VIGNETTE IN WHICH SADAT SWORE IN HIS NEW FOREIGN
MINISTER IN A CASUAL FASHION IN FRONT OF THE ISRAEL
DELEGATION SO THAT HE COULD TAKE PART OFFICIALLY IN THE
MEETING. (THIS IMAGE IS A SNAPSHOT OF HOW DIFFERENT
THINGS HAVE BECOME BETWEEN EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELIS SINCE
NOVEMBER 19.)

12. AT THE CLOSE OF BEGIN'S RECITAL, I ASKED A NUMBER
OF QUESTIONS, THE ANSWERS TO WHICH ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW.
HE MADE CLEAR THERE WAS NO REAL DISCUSSION OF EITHER
HIS SINAI PROPOSAL OR THE PALESTINIAN SELF-RULE ISSUE
EXCEPT IN THE FIRST WORKING MEETING SUNDAY AFTERNOON,
AND THEN ONLY VERY LIMITED DISCUSSION. SADAT LISTENED
VERY INTENTLY TO THE ISRAELI PRESENTATIONS BUT LARGELY
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LIMITED HIMSELF TO SAYING HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER THE
PROPOSALS AND THEN PRESENT HIS COUNTER-PROPOSALS. BEGIN
SAID THAT JANUARY 15 WOULD BE THE OPENING DATE FOR BOTH
THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY COMMITTEES. HE DESCRIBED
HIS TELEPHONE CONVERSATION LAST NIGHT WITH PRESIDENT
CARTER AND HIS INVITATION TO THE PRESIDENT TO ASK
SECRETARY VANCE TO ATTEND THE MEETING IN JERUSALEM ON
THE 15TH. HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE HOPED THE SECRETARY
COULD COME FOR THE OPENING SESSIONS, ALTHOUGH OF
COURSE HE WOULD NOT EXPECT HIM TO REMAIN THROUGHOUT THE
MANY WEEKS WHICH HE EXPECTED THE COMMITTEE'S SESSIONS
TO RUN. HE SAID THAT ROY ATHERTON OR ANYONE ELSE WOULD

OF COURSE BE WELCOME TO SIT IN AS THE US REPRESENTATIVE
AFTER THE SECRETARY LEFT.

13. BEGIN INSISTED THAT THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION ABOUT
THE PROBLEM OF GETTING JORDAN INTO THE NEGOTIATING
PROCESS. (AVNER CONFIRMED THIS TO ME LATER.) SADAT
SAID SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE COULD NOT NEGOTIATE FOR SYRIA
OR JORDAN OR THE PALESTINIANS; THAT HE BELIEVED JORDAN
WOULD ONE DAY SOON JOIN THE PROCESS, BUT THAT HE DID
NOT ANTICIPATE THAT ASSAD WOULD JOIN IN THE FORESEEABLE
FUTURE. HE WAS REPEATEDLY VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ASSAD.
CONTRARY TO THE STATEMENT IN PARA ONE OF REF C TO THE
EFFECT THAT NEITHER SIDE SEEMS TO EXPECT, NOR EVEN TO
WANT, EARLY PARTICIPATION OF ANY OTHER PARTIES, BEGIN
CONFIRMED TO ME MORE THAN ONCE THAT HE VERY MUCH HOPED
JORDAN WOULD JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT HE HOPED WE WOULD
MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PERSUADE KING HUSSEIN TO DO SO.
HE SAID HE HAD MADE THIS POINT IN HIS PHONE CALL TO
PRESIDENT CARTER LAST NIGHT.

14. WITH REGARD TO THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL FOR THE EGYPTIAN-
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ISRAELI TREATY, BEGIN DID SAY THAT HE HAD THE IMPRESSION
THE EGYPTIANS MIGHT BE READY TO GO TO APPROXIMATELY TWO
YEARS FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD BETWEEN PHASE ONE AND
THE FINAL WITHDRAWAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER.
MOREOVER, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE READING OUT OF THE
ISRAELI PROPOSALS, BEGIN READ PARAGRAPH TWO WITHOUT
ANY COMMENT OR CONTRADICTION FROM SADAT. (PARA TWO
READS: "IN JERUSALEM THE PRESIDENT SAID, INTER ALIA,
TO THE PRIME MINISTER: A. THAT IT IS HIS INTENTION TO
DECLARE THE STRAITS OF TEHRAN TO BE AN INTERNATIONAL
WATERWAY; B. THAT THE EGYPTIAN ARMY WILL NOT MOVE EAST-
WARDS OF MITLA AND GIDI PASSES AND THAT THE WHOLE AREA
EAST OF THE PASSES WILL BE DEMILITARIZED." THE FACT
THAT SADAT DID NOT CONTRADICT THIS STATEMENT IN FRONT
OF HIS DELEGATION MAKES BEGIN CONFIDENT THAT HE WILL
STAND BY IT, DESPITE WHAT WAS SAID TO WEIZMAN BY SADAT
LAST WEEK.

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15. IN SUMMING UP HIS REACTIONS TO THE MEETINGS, BEGIN
SAID HE HAD GENUINELY A GREAT DEAL OF SYMPATHY AND UNDER-
STANDING FOR SADAT'S PROBLEM WITH THE ARABS AND HIS
GREAT COURAGE IN LAUNCHING THIS CURRENT EFFORT. BUT HE
STRESSED HOWEVER THAT IN DOING EVERYTHING HE COULD TO
ASSIST SADAT HE COULD NOT "WOUND HIS OWN PEOPLE", HE
ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAS A LARGE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY
FOR THE PROPOSALS HE HAS MADE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT
THEY WILL CAUSE HIM VERY GREAT PROBLEMS "WITH HIS VERY
BEST FRIENDS." HE SAID HE TOLD SADAT THAT NOT ONLY
SADAT HAD POLITICAL PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH BUT HE HAD
THEM AS WELL. HE REMARKED TO ME THAT TO GO VERY FAR
BEYOND THE PROPOSALS HE HAD ALREADY MADE WOULD INDEED
"WOUND HIS OWN PEOPLE." BEGIN SAID TO SADAT THAT ISRAEL
WOULD BE RUNNING REAL MILITARY RISKS WHEN IT WITHDREW
TOTALLY FROM SINAI. HE SAID HW WAS WILLING TO
ACCEPT SUCH RISKS BECAUSE HE RELIED ON SADAT'S PERSONAL
WORD THAT "THERE WILL BE NO MORE WAR," YET, HE EXPLAINED
TO SADAT, EVEN WITH MOST OF THE SINAI DEMILITARIZED, IT
IS STILL ONLY EIGHT TO TEN HOURS FROM YOUR FORCES TO OUR
BOUNDARY, AND WE CANNOT KNOW WHAT SORT OF SUCCESSOR YOU
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MIGHT HAVE. FOR THIS REASON, HE STRESSED THE EXTENT OF
THE RISKS HE BELIEVED HE WAS RUNNING. BEGIN RETURNED
TO HIS CAPITAL SOBERED BY SADAT'S APPARENT ECONOMIC
DIFFICULTIES AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS, CONVINCED OF HIS
GOOD WILL AND GOOD FAITH, AWARE THAT THERE IS A GREAT
DEAL OF DIFFICULT NEGOTIATION AHEAD, BUT BERY SATISFIED
THAT FINALLY A TRUE BILATERAL NEGOTIATION IS UNDERWAY
BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS PRINCIPAL ARAB ANTAGONIST.

16. AS I WAS LEAVING, BEGIN ASKED ME TO CONVEY IN
STRICTEST CONFIDENCE TO THE SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT
TWO OTHER POINTS: A. BEGIN WILL TRAVEL TO MOROCCO
TO SEE KING HASSAN NEXT MONDAY FOR A ONE-DAY VISIT.
HE HOPES THAT KING HASSAN MIGHT YET AGREE TO MAKE IT
A PUBLIC VISIT, BUT FOR THE MOMENT IT IS SCHEDULED TO
BE A SECRET TRIP.
B. DAYAN IS TODAY IN TEHRAN SECRETLY TO CONSULT WITH
THE SHAH ABOUT THE CAIRO MEETINGS. BEGIN SAID THAT
ISRAELI-IRANIAN RELATIONS WERE NOW "VERY GOOD INDEED."
LEWIS

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From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771214/aaaaalqi.tel
Line Count: 559
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 11
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 77 TEL AVIV 11023, 77 CAIRO 22940, 77 CAIRO 22938
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 125293
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BEGIN'S REPORT ON HIS MEETINGS WITH SADAT IN ISMAILIA
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, EG, IS, XF, (SADAT, ANWAR), (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/da0b5efc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
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